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Agenda items 134 and 149

**Programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017****Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the  
United Nations peacekeeping operations****Review of the United Nations Office to the African Union****Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and  
Budgetary Questions**

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General on the review of the United Nations Office to the African Union (A/71/551). During its consideration of the report, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses dated 28 November 2016.

**I. Background**

2. The Secretary-General indicated that his report was submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/287, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to undertake a comprehensive review of the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) and to submit his proposals for consideration by the Assembly no later than during the main part of its seventy-first session (A/71/551, para. 1).

3. Section II of the report describes the evolution of the United Nations-African Union Partnership on issues of peace and security and indicates that since its establishment in 2010, UNOAU has redefined and adjusted its priorities in response to the evolving needs of the partnership with the African Union as well as the new demands on its mandate arising from General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. The report states that the UNOAU Head of Office reports to the Secretary-General through the Department of Political Affairs, while on matters relevant to peacekeeping and field support, the Head of UNOAU reports to the



Secretary-General through the respective Under-Secretaries-General of peacekeeping and field support (A/71/551, paras. 7 and 16).

4. The report indicates that a strategic review in 2013, conducted jointly by the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, concluded that UNOAU needed to be strengthened in a number of areas, including expanding and strengthening its political affairs component. A follow-up civilian staffing review in 2015 highlighted the need to align the Office's structure and resources to strengthen the strategic partnership of the United Nations and the African Union and to better align short-term demands to longer-term priorities. The report also states that following the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, a working group composed of representatives from the three departments and from UNOAU was established in 2016 to review the available mechanisms to finance and support African Union peace operations (A/71/551, paras. 21 to 24).

## **II. Proposals of the Secretary-General**

5. The Secretary-General proposes to restructure UNOAU to strengthen strategic coherence with the African Union and its regional economic communities/regional mechanisms; strengthen strategic coordination and partnership with United Nations entities and other partners; and increase operational synergies and provide support in addressing ongoing conflict in Africa (A/71/551, para. 54). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that UNOAU conducts regular briefings with the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and maintains regular contact with individual members of the Peace and Security Council, as well as conducting other meetings with African Union member States. The Committee was also informed that UNOAU is engaged with a range of peacebuilding activities in the six countries on the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission's agenda and provides support to the African Union in its engagement with the Peacebuilding Commission.

6. With respect to its relationship with regional entities, the Advisory Committee was informed upon enquiry that UNOAU works with the regional economic communities and regional mechanisms, through the United Nations subregional presences and political offices as well as the special political missions and peacekeeping operations in Africa, by facilitating coordination, joint analysis and joint missions and by provision of support. The Advisory Committee recalls in this context that it had previously noted that since the establishment of UNOAU in July 2010, the role of the Office and its partnership with the African Union had grown in scale and complexity. It was on that basis that the Committee had recommended that the Secretary-General be requested to undertake the comprehensive review of the Office, including its staffing and funding structure (A/70/837, para. 66), which was subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/287.

7. In his report, the Secretary-General proposes a revised UNOAU structure, to take effect from 1 January 2017, which would comprise the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General; a newly established Office of the Deputy Head of Office; an Office of the Chief of Staff to oversee the Administrative Support Section; the Political Affairs Section; and the establishment of the post of Head of the Institutional and Operational Partnership Service to lead the

Operational Planning and Advisory Section and the Mission Support Planning Section (A/71/551, paras. 55 and 56, and annex II).

8. Paragraph 42 of the report states that 60 posts are currently approved for UNOAU, consisting of 6 posts provided under the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 and 54 posts under the support account for peacekeeping operations for the 2016/17 period, as well as one Human Rights Officer position approved by the General Assembly in resolution 70/287. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the funding sources and respective portions of the current UNOAU resources reflect its original establishment in 2010, which integrated the functions of the then United Nations Liaison Office of the Department of Political Affairs (funded from the programme budget), the African Union Peacekeeping Support Team of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (funded from the support account for peacekeeping operations), the United Nations planning team of the Department of Field Support for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) (funded from the budget for financing of support for AMISOM), and the support component of the Joint Support and Coordination Mechanism in Addis Ababa (funded from the budget of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID)). The Committee was also informed that any proposed change to the funding sources, programme budget and support account for peacekeeping operations would require a change in the mandate of UNOAU by the Security Council and/or the General Assembly. The Committee was further informed that as an integrated office, UNOAU does not distinguish between the Department of Political Affairs and Department of Peacekeeping Operations work streams, since it is mandated to provide coordinated and consistent United Nations support to the African Union.

9. The proposed post changes comprise the following: the establishment of three posts, 1 D-1 Chief of Staff, 1 D-1 Head of the Institutional and Operational Partnership Service and 1 National Professional Officer Public Information Officer; the abolishment of 5 posts (2 Field Service and 3 national General Service); the redeployment of 4 posts (2 P-4, 1 Field Service and 1 national General Service); and the reassignment of 15 posts (1 D-2, 1 P-5, 6 P-4, 1 P-3, 2 Field Service and 4 national General Service) (A/71/551, para. 64).

10. The proposed new D-1 Chief of Staff would oversee the Administrative Support Section and would be responsible for the internal management and the day-to-day operation of UNOAU, strategic planning and coordination, implementation of organizational policies and procedures, and public information and security planning. The Chief of Staff would also be responsible for ensuring effective communication and reporting within UNOAU and with Headquarters, while working closely with the African Union Commission and liaising with other partners (A/71/551, para. 73). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Chief of Staff would ensure the integration and the coordination of the various strategic planning, information sharing and day-to-day management aspects of the work of the Office, in close collaboration with United Nations Headquarters, United Nations entities and partners.

11. The report indicates that the current D-2 Chief of Staff, who performs both the functions of the Chief of Staff and the Deputy Head of Office, would be reassigned as the Deputy Head of Office. According to the Secretary-General, since 2010, those

joint functions have become constrained as the United Nations-African Union partnership has grown in scale and in complexity, and if released from daily management and internal coordination responsibilities, the proposed Deputy Head of Office would be better able to support the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in political engagement with the African Union and provide guidance on political, institutional and operational issues. The proposed new Deputy Head of Office would oversee the Political Affairs Section and the new Institutional and Operational Partnership Service (A/71/551, paras. 67 and 68, and annex II). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Deputy Head of Office would work closely with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union and would coordinate the work of the Political Affairs Section and the Institutional and Operational Partnerships Service in their work and support to the African Union. The Deputy Head would also provide advice and recommend priorities on strategic, policy, political and operational issues.

12. The proposed new Institutional and Operational Partnership Service would be staffed by one D-1 Head of Service overseeing the Operational Planning and Advisory Section and Mission Support Planning Section. It is stated that the new service would provide technical advice and support to the African Union on military and police operations, mine action, security-related matters and mission support and administrative planning, and also liaise with the African Union Commission in operationalizing the necessary financing mechanisms and support processes for the African Union's peace support operations. The proposed Head of Service would engage with senior African Union Commission officials and ambassadors of member States represented in Addis Ababa, and provide senior-level management and strategic and mission management, including for operational tasking and guidance, resource allocation, recruitment and quality control (A/71/551, paras. 87 to 89). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the D-1 Head of Service would lead ongoing consultations with United Nations Headquarters on peacekeeping-related aspects of the partnership with the African Union and contribute to the development of partnership strategies and workplans with the African Union Commission, while ensuring that there is coherence and coordination between the Operational Planning and Advisory Section and the Mission Support Planning Section in their support to the African Union.

**13. In the light of the respective functions of the proposed D-1 Chief of Staff, D-2 Deputy Head of Office and D-1 Head of the Institutional and Operational Partnership Service, and taking into account the fact that the D-1 Chief of Staff as proposed would oversee only one section (the Administrative Support Section), and that some of the strategic and operational functions to be undertaken by the D-2 Deputy Head of Office would be facilitated by the establishment of the proposed D-1 Head of the Institutional and Operational Partnership Service, the Advisory Committee is of the view that the functions of the Chief of Staff could be performed by the Deputy Head of Office, and recommends against the proposed D-1 Chief of Staff. Any related non-post resources should be adjusted accordingly. The Committee recommends approval of the remaining proposed post changes.**

14. The report indicates that the current proposals do not have any financial implications for the approved programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017, while

resource implications in respect of the support account for peacekeeping operations for the 2016/17 period would amount to a reduction of \$38,900 in post resources (gross of staff assessment) (A/71/551, para. 103).

15. The Advisory Committee recalls that by its resolution 2320 (2016) dated 18 November 2016, the Security Council noted the decision of the Secretary-General to conduct an assessment of United Nations-African Union cooperation, as well as the structure and capacity of UNOAU to meet the growing demands for the partnership. The Council requested the Secretary-General to report to it after the completion of the assessment. In his report, the Secretary-General indicated that, depending on the decision of the Council, he might seek to realign the current proposals, which would be presented to the General Assembly for its consideration and approval (A/71/551, para. 3).

### III. Conclusion

16. Paragraph 106 of the report sets out the actions requested of the General Assembly. **Subject to its comments and recommendations above, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the proposed restructuring of the United Nations Office to the African Union. The Advisory Committee also recommends approval of the establishment of 2 new posts (1 D-1 Head of the Institutional and Operational Partnership Service and 1 National Professional Officer), the abolishment of 5 posts (2 Field Service and 3 national General Service), the redeployment of 4 posts and the reassignment of 14 posts under the support account for peacekeeping operations, effective 1 January 2017, as well as the reassignment of the D-2 post approved under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017.**